



Sympathy and Prompt Attentions

A Resource Guide for Candlelight Tour 2005:
Fort Vancouver's Relief of the U.S.S. *Shark* on
September 13, 1846

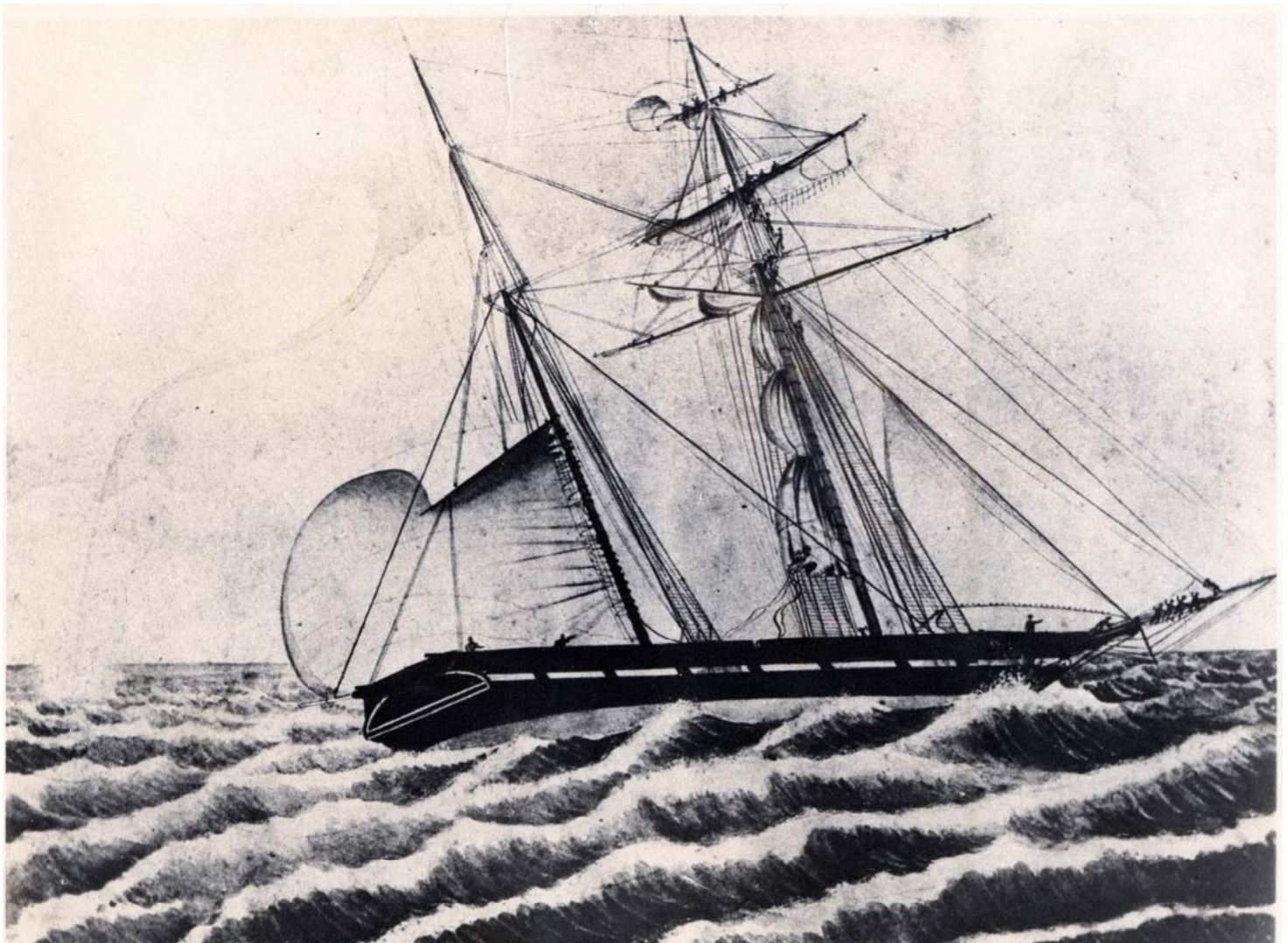


Photo of a Painting of the U.S.S. Shark, courtesy of the Cloumbia River Maritime Museum, Astoria, Oregon

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September 7, 2005

Cast on the shore as we were, with nothing besides the clothes we stood in, and those thoroughly saturated, no time was to be lost in seeking new supplies. I left the crew, indifferently sheltered, at Astoria, and...pushed up the river to Vancouver, whither news of our disaster had preceded us, and elicited the sympathy of and prompt attentions of the factors of the Hudson's Bay Company and of Captain Baillie and the officers of her Britannic Majesty's ship 'Modeste'.

Lieutenant Neil Howison, U.S.S. *Shark*

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Special Thank You to Volunteers for 2005 Candlelight Tour

On behalf of the staff of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site and the Vancouver National Historic Reserve, we wish to thank you for your volunteer support of the 2005 Candlelight Tour.

We believe that volunteering one's time and energy is one of the most treasured gifts one can give.

We understand that volunteer opportunities abound, and we deeply appreciate your choice to volunteer with us.

Thank you for supporting Fort Vancouver NHS and the Vancouver National Historic Reserve with your time and talents!

Forward

Greetings! This year, we are unifying the Candlelight Tour around a specific -- and exciting -- event in our region's history. Using evidence from the historical record, we will interpret the fort's response to the wreck of the U.S.S. *Shark*, almost exactly 159 years after it occurred.

Inside the fort at the Candlelight Tour, conversations in the mess hall will have a different focus than in past years, as the gentlemen discuss the relief efforts and reflect on the *Shark*'s recent visit. The bakers, blacksmiths, and carpenters will be busily working on providing provisions and equipment for the shipwrecked crew. Blacksmiths will be working late into the evening to fabricate chain for a possible salvage effort, and the Bake House ovens will be aglow as the French-Canadian baker works to provide sea biscuits for the shipwrecked sailors. Carpenters will work on crates and containers for the supplies to sail with the fort's launch the following morning. The Kitchen employees will be doubly busy, preparing food for the gentlemen's mess as well as for the shipwrecked sailors.

To help guide these invigorating changes, it is important to have sound historical documentation. As a means to this end, it is with much delight that I introduce this resource guide for our 2005 Candlelight Tour.

Through extensive research over the past several months, I have learned much about the relief effort for the *Shark*, as well as the compelling stories and pressing issues of the Oregon Territory in the summer of 1846. I hope that you find this information helpful, thought-provoking, and motivating as you prepare for our two big evenings.

In addition to several members of the park staff who provided review and insight, a special thanks goes out to several outside organizations and individuals who aided completion of this document.

Thanks to Patrick Harris, Executive Director Museum of the Oregon Territory in Oregon City, Oregon, provided a friendly research atmosphere and access to the pertinent issues of the *Oregon Spectator*. Liisa Penner of the Clatsop County Historical Society shared valuable information from past editions of *Cumtux*. Jeffrey H. Smith, Associate Curator at the Columbia River Maritime Museum, located the wonderful image of the U.S.S. *Shark* that graces the cover of this document, and also acquainted me with the work of the late Jim Dennon.

Thanks are also due the park staff and volunteers, who, with creativity and ingenuity, have worked to transform this year's event. Of course, none of these energizing changes would be possible without the leadership of our superintendent, Tracy Fortmann, and I thank her for her continued support of our interpretive events.

Have a wonderful event!

Greg Shine, Chief Ranger

Introduction

This first attempt at a Resource Guide is targeted toward the staff and volunteers portraying personnel inside the fort. In the future, further resource information will be developed, including resources to supplement activities in the village and in the timeline of history outside the fort.

By focusing on this exciting episode, we have the opportunity to better meet our interpretive goals. This historical episode is compelling, exciting, and appropriate for Candlelight Tour for a number of reasons.

It links the Candlelight Tour to a specific historical event and increases the historical accuracy of the event

Past Candlelight tours have been loosely and generically set in 1845, portraying an amalgamation of many different historical events rather than one individual event and/or specific date in the historical record.

Linking to a specific event that occurred at roughly the same date (September 13-14, 1846) as the Candlelight Tour increases our historical accuracy and avoids the possibility of providing confusing messages to our visitors.

It justifies night activity at the fort

Traditionally, little activity appears to have taken place inside the fort in the evenings. Occasional nighttime incidents, such as late returns and Captain Baillie's late night dances, appear to have been more incidental and limited in size and scope.

The *Shark* incident provides us with evidence of nighttime activity inside the fort. With no evidence to the contrary, a fair assumption can be made that the outfitting of this relief effort lasted into the evening of September 13, 1846, since it was prepared and dispatched in under 24 hours (Lowe, 14 September 1846).

It provides more of an opportunity to introduce major themes in the history of the Pacific Northwest and the U.S.

By basing our event in 1846, we can now interpret more of the major themes in our nation's history.

We can more fully discuss seminal national issues -- such as manifest destiny, war with Mexico, the annexation of Texas, and the Oregon Boundary issue -- as well as local and regional issues, including the completion of the Barlow Road section of the Oregon Trail, land claim issues between American immigrants and the British Hudson's Bay Company, the retirement of Dr. John McLoughlin to Oregon City, and the growing role of Fort Victoria.

A wealth of historical resources exist that document the activity surrounding the *U.S.S. Shark* incident

Howison's complete and detailed account provides crucial information. We possess copies of letters to Howison from Captain Baillie, Chief Factors Ogden and Douglas, Henry Peers, George Abernethy, and John Couch, with pertinent information regarding the relief efforts for the *Shark's* crew. Lowe's journal details the incident in two of its longer passages (September 13 & 14). Lowe's journal also provides the context of the event by detailing supplementary information that tells us who was at the fort at the time and what other events were taking place (e.g., the fort's learning on August 25 of the outbreak of war with Mexico and the termination of the mutual occupancy of Oregon by the U.S.). *Oregon Spectator* accounts from the summer and autumn of 1846 exist and may shed light on the event and its context. The *Oregon Spectator* became the first American newspaper on the Pacific coast on February 5, 1846.

The *U.S.S. Shark* incident is a fun, compelling, and entertaining story that can captivate audiences and further ties the American story to the fort.

This story will provide a unified theme that will better unite the activities within the fort. The event also has ties to local and anecdotal history that resonates well with the public. Portions of the *Shark's* deck between the mainmast and the fore hatch were recovered on the Oregon coast shortly after the wreck (Howison, 11). This portion of deck hosted three carronades, one of which was recovered by Howison's crew. One of the two abandoned carronades was later found, and the area was named Cannon Beach after this carronade. Today, Cannon Beach is a popular tourist attraction, and many of the event's attendees will be familiar with it.

The *Shark* lost several valuable items, including a box that contained \$4000. Avocational salvagers and treasure hunters still today seek the *Shark's* wealth. Along with many other shipwrecks, the *Shark* plays a major role in the legend and lore of the Columbia River's maritime history.

What is the basic story of the U.S.S. *Shark* in the Pacific Northwest?

In 1846, under orders from the U.S. Secretary of the Navy, Commander Sloat of the Pacific Squadron detailed Lt. Neil M. Howison and the *U.S.S. Shark* to the Columbia River for a two-month examination and investigation of the situation in Oregon.

On the evening of July 24, 1846, the *U.S.S. Shark*, commanded by Howison, reached Fort Vancouver, where he was greeted by Captain Baillie and Chief Factor Douglas. Howison wrote that “I found H.B.M. sloop-of-war ‘*Modeste*’ Captain Baillie, who immediately sent on board his compliments and the offer of his services” (Howison, 6).

For the next 30 days, Howison and his crew explored the area’s rivers, lands, and settlements, while using Fort Vancouver as a *de facto* base of operations. Several interactions between the crew of the *Shark* and fort personnel are noted in the historical record.

On the morning of August 23, the *Shark* left Fort Vancouver, and on September 10, it attempted to cross the Columbia River bar into the Pacific Ocean. Following dramatic efforts to cross, the ship was wrecked on the Clatsop Spit, located at the southern side of the river’s mouth. Although no crew members were lost in the evacuation, all of the ship’s papers, property and many valuables were. The survivors reached safety at Clatsop Beach.

“Cast on the shore as we were, with nothing besides the clothes we stood in, and those thoroughly saturated, no time was to be lost in seeking new supplies. I left the crew, indifferently sheltered, at Astoria, and...pushed up the river to Vancouver, whither news of our disaster had preceded us, and elicited the sympathy of and prompt attentions of the factors of the Hudson’s Bay Company and of Captain Baillie and the officers of her Britannic Majesty’s ship ‘*Modeste*’” (Howison, 10).

What type of ship was the *Shark*? How many guns did it carry?

The *Shark* was a schooner of the Baltimore Clipper design. Weighing in at 198 tons, the ship was 86 feet long with two masts. The *Shark*’s armament included ten 18-pound cannonades and two 9-pound “Long Tom” guns. Launched at the Washington D.C. Naval Yard in 1821, the *Shark*’s first commander was Lt. Matthew C. Perry, known for forcing the opening of Japanese ports to western nations as a commodore in 1854.

Who were the officers and crew of the *Shark*?

It took a crew of 70 men to sail this ship effectively. On August 6, 1846, the *Oregon Spectator* printed a list of the officers onboard the *Shark*. They included: Lieut. Commanding Neil M. Howison, Lieut. W.S. Schenck, Acting Master James D. Bullock, Acting Purser Wm. S. Hollins, Assistant Surgeon Edward Hudson, Passed Midshipman T. McLanahan, Midshipmen T.J. Simes and H. Davidson, and Captain's Clerk, J.M. Maury.

While in the area, a total of ten sailors deserted the *Shark*. A reward was offered for their return, and on August 11, a broadside (poster) was printed and distributed with the names and descriptions of several of the deserters. Included are John Tice, Alexander Stevens, John P. Iglehart, George Rathburn, John Whitesell, and Andrew Tilton.

Were there other ships moored at Fort Vancouver along with the *Shark*? How did they compare to the *Shark*?

When the *Shark* anchored at Fort Vancouver on the night of July 24, also moored were the HMS *Modeste*, two HBC barques and one HBC ship (Howison, 6). The *Modeste* was much larger than the *Shark*; in comparison, the *Modeste* was 568 tons with 18 guns, and was built 16 years later than the *Shark*. When she returned to Fort Vancouver on July 28, the *Shark* anchored between the *Modeste* and the HBC's vessel *Admiral Moorson*.

Why was the U.S.S. *Shark* in the Pacific Northwest?

In 1839, the *Shark* joined the Pacific Squadron, and traveled to the Pacific Ocean. (Incidentally, en route it was the first U.S. naval vessel to pass through the Straits of Magellan from east to west.) In April 1846, Commodore Sloat ordered the *Shark* to Honolulu for repairs and provisions before sailing to the Columbia River. Howison's orders were to sail to the Willamette Valley and

“determine the disposition of the residents of those friendly to United States compared to those friendly to Great Britain, and the extent, character, and tendency of emigration from the United States and from other quarters, and the condition and prosperity of the territory. He was to forward journals of their observations in which he would notice settlements and establishments, forts and trading houses, the soil, climate, and productions” (Dennon, 8).

Howison further explained that “[t]he officers were also directed to seek all the information respecting the country which their respective opportunities might afford,” (Howison, 7). Sloat directed Howison to complete his mission and depart the Columbia by September 1, 1846.

During their stay in the area, what did the crew of the *Shark* do?

In order to achieve his mission, Howison divided his command to garner the most information possible. “[M]y explorations were necessarily limited,” Howison wrote, “making the best use of our time. Many interesting portions of the country were still unvisited...” (Howison, 9). Although any complete accounting of his travels was destroyed in the wreck of the *Shark*, his report provides insight into his activities and those of his command.

On July 26, after grounding the *Shark* while attempting to enter the Willamette River, Howison recalled that he “sent off in a boat the first lieutenant and some other officers to visit Oregon City, and the neighboring American settlers.” (Howison, 7). Later, he sent Lt. Schenck “up the Columbia River as high as the Dalles, to find out what settlements had been made along its banks, and more particularly to endeavor to gain some information of the large emigration which was expected...” (Howison, 8).

Howison also visited Oregon City on at least two occasions. “From the city the governor [George Abernethy] accompanied me for a week’s ride through the Willamette valley” (Howison, 7). He also visited “the Twality plains and returned again by the city and river” (Howison, 8).

In a letter printed in the September 3 issue of the *Oregon Spectator*, M. M. McCarver wrote that, “[w]hile on a visit to the upper Willamette Settlement with the officers of the U.S. Schooner *Shark*, we were shown a field of wheat at Gen. Gilliam’s, from which two crops had been cut from the same sowing (*Oregon Spectator*, 3 September 1846).

Thomas Lowe, a young HBC clerk at Fort Vancouver, recorded Howison’s return to the fort in his journal on August 11, 1846. He noted that Howison returned with Governor Abernethy accompanying him, noting that he “has been absent for some time on a trip to the Wallamette” (Lowe, 11 August 1846).

On August 20, Howison sold the launch from the U.S.S. *Peacock* to a Mr. Shelly, “who designs to have her repaired and employed for a pilot boat at the mouth of the Columbia” (*Oregon Spectator*, 3 September 1846). After the *Peacock*’s wreck at the mouth of the Columbia in 1841, its launch had been entrusted to Dr. McLoughlin by Capt. Wilkes and “[m]any applications had been made for her by American emigrants, but Dr. McLaughlin did not feel authorized to deliver her to any other than a United States officer” (Howison, 8-9).

How did Lt. Howison perceive his role in the area?

From the American perspective, Howison wrote that “[t]he English officers used every gentlemanly caution to reconcile our countrymen to their presence, but no really good

feelings existed. Indeed, there could never be congeniality between persons so entirely dissimilar as an American frontier man and a British naval officer” (Howison, 7).

Howison explained that, “[i]n the excited state of public feeling which existed among the Americans upon my arrival, the settled conviction on the mind of everyone that all Oregon belonged to us, and that the English had long been gleaning its products, I soon discovered that, so far from arousing new zeal and patriotism, it was my duty to use any influence which my official character put me in possession of to allay its exuberance, and advise our countrymen to await patiently the progress of negotiations at home” (Howison, 7).

Howison’s advocacy of patience ostensibly paid off, for both he and the *Shark* appear to have been well received by the American population in Oregon.

We have recently been honored with the presence of the officers of the U.S. schr. Shark amongst us, and heartily glad we were to see them. There appears to be an undefinable something about them different from officers of other nations. Is this prejudice in us? Is it because we are glad to see anything that has Uncle Sam about it? Or is it that every citizen of the United States, of whatever rank or station, has instilled in him a portion of that principle so forcibly expressed in the immortal words of Jefferson, that “all men are born free and equal? (*Oregon Spectator*, 20 August 1846).

What interactions did the officers and crew of the U.S.S. *Shark* have with the Hudson’s Bay Company staff at Fort Vancouver? Did they get along?

When the *Shark* arrived at Fort Vancouver on the night of July 24, it seems to have been a surprise to the HBC. Lowe wrote that the *Shark* arrived “quite unexpectedly, having not been expected to come here at all” (Lowe, 24 July 1846). Despite the surprise, the *Shark* was welcomed. According to Howison, when the *Shark* arrived Captain Baillie “sent on board his compliments and the offer of his services. The next morning, Mr. Douglass...called on me with polite offers of supplies, &c” (Howison, 6).

Howison reported that the HBC strongly supported the U.S. Navy’s presence in the area, and desired that it be on a more permanent basis.

The company’s agents expressed to me their fervent hopes that the United States would keep a vessel of war in the river, or promptly send out commissioners to define the bounds of right and property under treaty. They have been excessively annoyed by some of our countrymen who, with but little judgment and less delicacy, are in the habit of infringing upon their lands, and construing the law to bear them out in doing so (Howison 32-3).

Evidence indicates that the officers and crew of the U.S.S. *Shark* had a very cordial – yet cautious – relationship with the H.B.C. and Royal Navy officers and staff.

Dining & Social Interaction Evidence supports both formal and informal social interaction between the *Shark* and the fort. The officers of the *Shark*, including Lt. Howison, dined with the fort's gentlemen on several occasions. On July 25, 1846, Lowe describes a "splendid cold dinner laid out at which 35 of us sat down, including the officers of the *Shark*." On July 28, 1846, Lowe noted that "[s]everal of the Officers of the *Shark* dined with us today." On August 11, 1846, Howison returned to the fort with Governor Abernethy, who remained for at least two days. Although not recorded in Lowe's journal, it may be assumed that Howison and Abernethy dined in the gentlemen's mess, in keeping with the fort's protocol.

Recreation & Sport The HBC put on organized horse races on at least two occasions while the *Shark* was in the area. Wildly popular, these events resulted in "an immense concourse of spectators," with all hands from the fort, the *Modeste*, and the local Indian population in attendance (Lowe, 25 August 1846). Peter Skene Ogden (who, along with James Douglas, was one of the fort's two chief factors) served as judge, and prizes were awarded. On July 25, 1846, Thomas Lowe describes a day of organized horse races with judges, prizes, and "spectators, among whom were most of the officers of the *Shark*." Afterwards, a "splendid cold dinner laid out at which 35 of us sat down, including the officers of the *Shark*." On August 22, 1846, Lowe describes another day of horse racing. "Several of the officers of the *Shark* also rode. Four of the prizes were gained by the *Modeste*, one by the *Shark*, and one by the fort."

Safety Prior to the wreck of the *Shark*, the HBC had come to the aid of the *Shark* at least once before. When the *Shark* grounded at the mouth of the Willamette River, Lowe reported that, "a scow and bateau were sent down to get the vessel off," (Lowe, 27 August 1846).

On at least one occasion, the crew of the *Shark* assisted the HBC and Royal Navy in suppressing a dangerous structural fire at the fort. Lowe records that, on August 18, 1846, "[a] fire broke out this forenoon in the camp, by which one house was burned and two others torn down to prevent it from spreading. Men were sent both from the *Modeste* and *Shark* with buckets to assist in extinguishing the flames."

When did the fort learn of the wreck of the *Shark*, and what was the fort's response?

The fort learned about the wreck of the U.S.S. *Shark* on the morning of September 13 (Lowe, 13 Sep 1846). Immediately, both Captain Baillie and Chief Factor Douglas began mobilizing relief efforts. The *Modeste*'s pinnace was sent downriver on the morning of September 14, under the command of Midshipman J. Montgomerie, with clothing and

provisions, including “such articles as are not likely to be obtained at Clatsop” and coffee, tea, tobacco, and bread (Lowe, 14 Sep 1846; Baillie, 13 September 1846; Ogden & Douglas, 13 September 1846).

Howison noted that “[t]hese gentlemen had unitedly loaded a launch with such articles of clothing and necessary provisions as we were most likely to need, and added a gratuitous offering of a bag of coffee and 80 pounds of tobacco” (Howison, 10).

Douglas and Ogden also made their resources at Astoria available, urging Howison to “apply to Mr. Peers for any articles of food or clothing you may want, and they will be at your service if he has them in store” (Ogden & Douglas, 13 September 1846).

By this time, Howison had resolved to return to Fort Vancouver to seek aid, and upon his trip upriver he met the pinnace sailing downriver about 25 miles below the fort.

Passing the pinnace, Howison continued to the fort, arriving late at night on September 14 (Lowe, 14 September 1846). At the fort, Howison’s “wants of every kind were immediately supplied by the Hudson’s Bay Company and although cash was at Oregon city...the company furnished all my requisitions, whether for cash or clothing...”(Howison, 10).

Howison spent the next several months attempting to salvage the *Shark* and awaiting repairs to the *Cadboro*, which he chartered at the fort from the Company. Howison and crew departed the Columbia River successfully aboard the *Cadboro* on January 18, 1847, arriving safely in San Francisco nine days later (Howison, 13).

In addition to the wreck of the *Shark*, what issues were most popular in the summer of 1846 – especially August and early September?

Land Claims

The issue of land claims was a major discussion topic in August and September of 1846 – especially for lands north of the Columbia River. Howison provided an excellent summary of the issue in his report to Congress.

[P]ersons wishing to hold land under the provisional government...were required to mark out its limits, and have it recorded by a person selected to keep a book of all such entries. Lands thus marked out were called “claims”; and in compliance with this requirement, the Hudson’s Bay Company had entered all their landed property in the names of their officers and clerks; they have omitted no means or forms necessary to secure them in their possessions. Fort Vancouver is surrounded by 18 English “claims”; viz: nine miles on the river and two back...” (Howison, 36).

On August 8, 1846, Thomas Lowe and others spent the day building homes on their land claims. Lowe wrote “[e]mployed all day building a small House on my claim, in order to fulfill the conditions of the Oregon Land Law, which requires that in order to hold a claim, some improvement must be made. Mr. Grahame and others were employed in a like manner erecting houses on their respective Claims” (Lowe, 8 August 1846).

Lowe further noted a rise in Americans attempting to homestead on claimed land – or claim jump – in early August 1846. “We have been obliged to take these precautions as 6 or 7 Americans are Prowling about in the woods, in order to jump such claims near the Fort as are not properly registered or improved upon” (Lowe, 8 August 1846).

As further evidence, a major incident involving claim jumping and the validity of land claims occurred on the afternoon of August 8, 1846. According to Lowe,

“In the afternoon a party of these Americans were found erecting a house on Mr. Grahame’s claim, and on his warning them off the ground, one of them named McNamee told him that he intended to take the claim, as he had been examining the Recorders Books at the Wallamatte Falls, wherein Mr. Grahame’s claim was mentioned as lying immediately behind Mr. Lane’s claim instead of behind Mr. Douglas’s. Mr. G. then showed him the Recorder’s Certificate to prove that there was no mistake, but McNamee would not be dissuaded from his attempt, and Mr. Grahame was obliged to procure a warrant from Mr. Douglas (who is Judge of the County) for his apprehension, and proceed with a party of men to take him. Neither he nor his party offered any resistance, and they were quietly brought to the Fort, and examined by Mr. Douglas. Mr. Douglas offered to receive bail for his appearance at the first Court held in the County, but he refused and was in consequence imprisoned” (Lowe, 8 August 1846).

The following day, August 9, 1846, Lowe reported that “[t]wo Americans came to Mr. Douglas this morning and offered to bail McNamee out, which was accepted, and they gave security for \$500 each. He was consequently immediately released” (Lowe, 9 August 1846). It is likely that the location of McNamee’s confinement was the fort’s jail, as it was the only jail in the immediate area.

In its subsequent edition following this incident, the *Oregon Spectator* ran an editorial that, perhaps surprisingly, seemed to support the HBC’s claims. This article was published in the issue of August 20, and most probably was an item of intense discussion.

We understand that a number of individuals from this side of the Columbia, have recently made so bold as to take claims in the immediate vicinity of Vancouver. And we learn that in one instance, this procedure has caused an altercation between one of the claimants and the authorities at Vancouver, which is likely to terminate in a lawsuit. We are opposed to anything like claim-jumping or intruding on the claim of any individual who has complied with the conditions of the law, in having it recorded and improvement made thereon within a certain limited time, yet we cannot see with some, that the offence of dispossessing an individual of his claim who has failed to comply with the conditions required by the statute, is any more heinous in its nature, barely from the fact that it is on the north side of the Columbia or near Fort Vancouver, when it is not intruding on grounds occupied by the Hudsons Bay Company (*Oregon Spectator*, 20 August 1846, 3).

This incident was of such high importance that Howison included it in his report to Congress.

“In a case where an American was confined one night in the fort for this sort of pertinacity, and refusing to give security that he would forbear in future such forcible entry upon the land, he instituted an action for damages for false imprisonment; but as no notice of suit had been served on the committing magistrate, and as I expostulated with the man on the subject, I believe he gave over the idea” (Howison, 33).

According to Howison, this incident and several other “arose from a belief that the Hudson’s Bay Company would be soon turned out of the country by the terms of the anticipated treaty, and many were led to this offensive course by a desire to succeed to those advantages which could not be conveyed away by the retiring company” (Howison, 34).

Resolution of the Oregon Question

In August and September 1846, a major issue of discussion continued to be the resolution of the Oregon boundary issue. As the *Oregon Spectator* described,

Oregon is the principal topic of inquiry and conversation throughout Europe and America. No political subject has involved and elicited so much public interest and discussion within the last twenty years, both in Europe and America, as the settlement of the Oregon question....The public newspapers are literally filled with discussions on the Oregon question (*Oregon Spectator*, 3 September 1846).

Howison noted the interest upon his arrival. "At this time we had not heard of the settlement of the boundary question, and intense excitement prevailed among all classes of residents on this important subject" (Howison, 7).

News from the eastern states took particularly long to reach Oregon, often eight to nine months. As an example, the *Oregon Spectator* featured the text of John Quincy Adams' speech of January 2, 1846 in the House of Representatives in its edition of August 20, 1846.

Visiting ships brought most news, in the form of personal knowledge, letters, and newspapers from other cities. The *Shark* was no exception – it brought updates very germane to the Oregon question. In its edition of August 6, the *Oregon Spectator* printed pertinent news provided by the *Shark*'s crew.

We learn by this arrival that up to the end of March, no decisive action had taken place between the government of the United States and Great Britain with regard to Oregon. The Senate of the U. States were still debating the resolution passed by the lower house, to give to Great Britain the necessary notice to a termination of the convention of 1818, admitting the right of joint occupation. There was no doubt the resolution would pass, but so amended as to leave it discretionary with the president to give the notice or not as might seem to him expedient....No preparations were making in the U. States for a result other than peaceful to the settlement of the question. The English papers to nearly the same date with our own are moderate and pacific on the subject (*Oregon Spectator*, 6 August 1846).

By September 3, 1846, citizens of the Oregon Country had learned that the Notice Bill – this bill calling for the United States to give the required one-year notice of termination of the 1818 agreement to Great Britain – had achieved final passage. Prior to this information, brought overland by Lt. Woodworth of the U.S. Navy, there was only the understanding of the bill having passed the House of Representatives. Prior to the arrival of the *Shark* and the subsequent news brought by Lt. Woodworth, speculation abounded as to the vote of the Senate and the potential of veto by President Polk, and talk of war with Great Britain increased in earnest. It was precisely during this period of

time that conventional wisdom shifted and the prospect of war with Great Britain appeared unlikely.

“The general opinion expressed in newspapers was, that if the U.S. Senate should also pass the Notice Bill, and no satisfactory compromise upon the subject of the northern boundary line of Oregon could be effected, war between the two nations would be the inevitable result....The succeeding arrival of news from the U. States considerably abated the belligerent and warlike feeling engendered by the former intelligence, by assuring them that neither the Senate nor Mr. Polk would be inflexibly determined upon claiming the whole of Oregon, but on the contrary, would undoubtedly be inclined to negotiate for a final and amicable settlement of the controversy, and determine on the 49th degree of parallel, as the line of mutual compromise (*Oregon Spectator*, 3 September 1846).

Unbeknownst to the population of the Oregon Territory, the U.S. Senate ratified a treaty on June 15, 1846 that established the international boundary at the 49th parallel. It also provided for Britain to continue navigational rights to the Columbia River until the expiration of its charter in 1863.

Although the population of the Oregon Country did not learn of the treaty until approximately November 1, 1846 (Lowe, 1 November 1846), it presents an opportunity for context – and irony -- in setting the scene for Candlelight Tour visitors.

Incidentally, David McLoughlin is credited with first bringing this information to Oregon in November of 1846, in the form of an article from the *Polynesian* dated August 29, 1846. He shared it with the fort and his father in Oregon City, who, in turn, shared it with the *Oregon Spectator*. The *Spectator* published it in a special publication in early November 1846. The long-awaited treaty establishing the boundary between the U.S. and Canada was signed in Washington D.C. on June 15, 1846.

American Immigration and the Oregon Trail

1846 represented the sixth year of a significant immigration of American citizens via the Oregon Trail. In the previous year, 1845, the 5000 immigrants doubled the number of Americans in the Oregon Territory. The immigration of 1845 was the last to utilize Fort Vancouver as the primary point of termination, for two overland routes opened in 1846.

The Barlow Road

In 1845, as a plethora of immigrants waited at the Dalles for the limited number of watercraft available to ferry them to Fort Vancouver over the remaining miles of their journey, several – including Joel Palmer and Sam Barlow -- adventured overland around Mount Hood and down Laurel Hill to Oregon City. Barlow recognized and seized the opportunity for constructing a wagon road for subsequent American immigrants that avoided water travel on the Columbia River.

In an official act, the Provisional Government granted Barlow the authority to collect a toll along the Mount Hood Road, thereby making it the first toll road in the Oregon Territory.

An Act authorizing Samuel K. Barlow to lay out and construct a road across the Cascade Mountains, and for other purposes....Sec 3, That it shall be lawful for said Barlow and his associates...to collect toll from all white persons ...that may pass to or from the Willamette Valley, for the space of two years, commencing on the first day of January A.D. 1846...at the following rates, to wit:

- For each wagon...5 dollars
- Each head of horses, mules or asses whether loose, geared, or saddled,...10 cents
- Each head of horned cattle whether loose, geared , or saddled...10 cents

Approved, Oregon City, Dec 18, 1845, Geo. Abernethy, Governor (*Oregon Spectator*, 20 August 1846).

On July 9, 1846, in an article entitled “The Mount Hood Road”, the *Spectator* reported on the road’s progress.

We are happy to learn from Capt. Barlow, who has just returned from the Cascade mountains, where he has been constructing a road to admit the passage of wagons direct from the dalls to this place, that the road is now complete, and that the wagons which were left in the mountains last fall, are on the way, and will reach this place in the course of two days. We have not room in this number to say more of this laudable enterprise (*Oregon Spectator*, 9 July 1846).

On September 3, 1846, just ten days before the night we are portraying, the *Spectator* announced that immigrants were beginning to arrive in earnest, and Sam Barlow was en route to escort them overland.

Some fifteen or sixteen emigrants have arrived, having performed the last part of their journey with pack-horses. They state that between 300 and 400 waggons must be near the Dalls at this time and nothing extraordinary preventing, they will probably arrive at Oregon City about the 25th instant. Mr. Barlow has gone to meet them in order to conduct them safely over his road (*Oregon Spectator*, 3 September 1846).

Southern Route (Scott-Applegate Route)

Although not successfully utilized by the date we are portraying, exploration of the Southern Route had begun in earnest, and was an item of note in the press.

Due to in-fighting, squabbles, and desertion, a party led by Levi Scott turned back shortly after leaving the Willamette Valley in spring of 1846. Recognizing the “vast importance of obtaining an easy and safe road to the Willamette Valley, by a southern route, and thus avoiding the numerous and heart-breaking difficulties of the Columbia”, the *Spectator* reported that they were “cheered with intelligence, that another party from Champoeg county is forming, and will soon be prepared to start, under the command of an able and experienced pilot (*Oregon Spectator*, 25 June 1846). This pilot was Jesse Applegate.

Utilizing information gleaned by Peter Skene Ogden, Applegate and a party of fourteen men departed Polk County on June 22, 1846 in search of a southern route.

Other Issues

Manifest Destiny

The phrase, which means obvious (or undeniable) fate, was coined by New York journalist John O'Sullivan in 1845, when he wrote that "it was the nation's manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us."

O'Sullivan's article first appeared in the July/August 1845 of the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* and thus would have been known to the Oregon Country population by September 1846.

War with Mexico

The fort first heard of the U.S. war with Mexico on Tuesday, August 25, when two Americans arrived at the fort and brought news that, "Mexico and the United States are at war." (Lowe, 25 August 1846).

California's Bear Flag Revolt

The California Republic was proclaimed on June 10, 1846 when John C. Frémont and his men in Sonoma declared independence from Mexico. The rebellion itself started on June 14, 1846.

Texas Annexation

On December 29, 1845, Texas is admitted as the 28th U.S. state. It became the first and, to date, only internationally recognized independent, sovereign state directly admitted to the United States as a constituent state of the Union.

The effect of Texas annexation on the Oregon Country was important, as Oregon, like Texas, lay partially in the way of U.S. expansion to the Pacific under the guiding concept of Manifest Destiny.

The Oregon Spectator printed a story from the Dublin Nation that summed the sentiment of many in the Oregon Territory.

The fact is, the accession of Texas has given a new value to Oregon. Oregon was once a remote and almost detached corner of the American empire. Now the want of Oregon, or slicing it away, would put the Union out of shape. It is all wanted to square the American territory" (*Oregon Spectator*, 20 August 1846).

Growing Role of Fort Victoria

On September 10, 1846, all of the furs gathered at the fort were sent to Victoria for "re-shipment to England" (Lowe, 10 September 1846). This marked a major and tangible example of the important transition of power between the two sites.

Dr. John McLoughlin in Oregon City

Dr. & Mrs. McLoughlin left the fort for their new home in Oregon City in January 1846 (Lowe, 6 January 1846; Morrison, 429). The McLoughlins' subsequent business, political, and social activities in Oregon City continued to be a topic of interest and discussion throughout the area.

Irish Potato Famine

The Famine continued from 1845 until 1851, and in the five years from 1846, over a million deaths and some two million refugees are attributed to the Great Hunger and much the same number of people immigrated to Great Britain, the United States, Canada, and Australia.

Appendix I: The Diary of Thomas Lowe

Thomas Lowe (1824-1912) worked as a clerk at Fort Vancouver for at least seven years. He kept a journal and recorded, on an almost daily basis, many of the goings-on at the fort. His diary, in the collections of the British Columbia Archives, sheds a fascinating light on the people and events at Fort Vancouver from 1843 to 1850.

Below are highlights of his diary entries for the three week period prior to Sunday, September 13, the day that we are portraying in the Candlelight Tour. For ease of review, these entries are recorded in reverse order, with the most “recent” days listed first.

13 September 1846 (Sunday)

- “Pisk” arrived from Fort George with letters from Mr. Peers about the wreck of the Shark.

12 September 1846 (Saturday)

- Strong winds
- Douglas, Roberts, and Lowe sailed to the Saw Mill; did not return until 9 p.m. because the wind failed them.
- Baillie and “Mr. McKinley” returned to the fort from Willamette Falls about the same time.

11 September 1846 (Friday)

- Beautiful weather
- Lowe and several others rode to Chalifoux Lake and picnicked

10 September 1846 (Thursday)

- Warm
- In the afternoon, the *Cadboro* left for Fort Victoria with:
 - Cargo of flour for the depot there
 - The outfit and servants orders for Victoria
 - A few packages for Nisqually and Langley
 - All of the furs collected at Fort Vancouver

9 September 1846 (Wednesday)

- Fine weather, cool at night

8 September 1846 (Tuesday)

- Cloudy, with rain in the afternoon
- Sangster started for Nisqually to join the steamer *Cormorant* to pilot it to NE end of Vancouver Island to pick up coal, then on to Fort Simpson
-

7 September 1846 (Monday)

- Cool weather, strong winds at night

6 September 1846 (Sunday)

- Cool in the morning, warm during the day

5 September 1846 (Saturday)

- Beautiful weather
- Americans sold more whiskey to HBC men, “many of them got drunk”

4 September 1846 (Friday)

- Fine day
- Lowe rode to Mill Plain, noted that “Mr. Harvey has got all the Grain taken in”
- Lowe also noted that “the Barns are as full as they can hold”

3 September 1846 (Thursday)

- Fine warm day
- *Cadboro* arrived from Victoria with cargo including beef and salmon
- *Cadboro* saluted the fort, and the fort returned the salute
- “Mr. Lewes” returned home

2 September 1846 (Wednesday)

- “Mr. George Simpson” started for Colville with the boats who are to bring down the Express
- “Mr. Hobbes” of the *Modeste* “goes up as far as the Cascades to see the country”
- After dinner McTavish and Coode of the *Modeste* started on a visit to the Willamette (do not return until September 15)

1 September 1846 (Tuesday)

- Fine weather
- Many men unfit for duty, “having got drunk on liquor which they purchased from Dick McCary, brought up in the ‘Callepooiah”
- An English traveler, Mr. Romaine, visited the fort after arriving overland on the Oregon Trail. He plans to catch up to the *Toulon* and travel on to Oahu

31 August 1846 (Monday)

- Fine day
- The apples in the garden are nearly ripe; Bruce is taking them in

30 August 1846 (Sunday)

- Beautiful weather
- The *Callepooiah* arrived “with liquor”

29 August 1846 (Saturday)

- Weather “still cool and cloudy”
- Indians report arrival of *Cadboro* in Baker’s Bay

28 August 1846 (Friday)

- Cool cloudy weather
- McTavish “finished packing the Furs”

27 August 1846 (Thursday)

- Fine day
- Barron and a work crew began reshingling the Chief Factors House (called the “Big House” by Lowe)

26 August 1846 (Wednesday)

- Beautiful day, not too warm
- Modeste fires a salute at noon for Prince Albert’s 27th birthday
- In the evening, Governor Abernethy and Mr. Cray arrive from Willamette Falls

25 August 1846 (Tuesday)

- “Dull close weather”
- Lt. [Selim E.] Woodworth and another American arrived at the fort after traveling for 95 days. They were the “first who have made their appearance of this year’s immigration from the United States”
- Woodworth brought the mail and was en route to the *Portsmouth*
- Woodworth brought news up to May 1846, including:
 - information “that Congress gave the year’s notice to England of the termination of the Oregon Territory, and that it will therefore cease in April 1847
 - information that the U.S. and Mexico were at war
 - news that 350 wagons are on there way to Oregon, with 100 headed to California
- David McLoughlin departs for Oahu in the Toulon with plans to return in the fall

24 August 1846 (Monday)

- Cooler than usual
- Lowe returned to work “having got rid of the fever and ague”
- Sangster returned from Fort George, having piloted the *Admiral Moorson* down the river

23 August 1846 (Sunday)

- Fine clear weather
- The Shark and Toulon departed early in the morning

\$30 Reward.

The following named men have deserted during the past week from the U. S. schooner *Shark*, viz: *John Tice*, aged about 25, 5 feet 8 or 9 inches high, dark hair and eyes, pretends to be a blacksmith, but is a bungler at that or any other business he undertakes. *Alexander Stevens*, aged 22 or thereabouts, 5 feet 10 inches high, of sallow complexion, light eyes and dry colored sandy hair, a simple smile generally on his face. *John P. Iglehart*, about 26 or 28 years old, 5 feet 7 inches high, roundly built, with black hair inclining to curl, erect in his carriage, and writes a good hand. *George Rathbun*, about 6 feet 1 or 2 inches high, of light curly hair; complexion and eyes also light; slight stoop in the shoulders; a good expression of countenance, and about 30 or 32 years of age. *John Whitesell*, 36 or 38 years old, spare figure, 5 feet 11 inches high; a serious, worn expression of face, and by trade a carpenter. *Andrew Tilton*, about 5 feet 9 inches high, slight figure, 25 or 26 years old, hair light brown; this chap carried off with him a small sum of money, and a few dozen pieces of clothing belonging to the officers. A REWARD of 30 dollars will be given for the apprehension and delivery on board the *Shark* of either of the above described men, and all reasonable expenses paid. They have all voluntarily and unsolicited pledged themselves to the U. States' service, and the good citizens of Oregon, it is hoped, will aid in bringing them back to fulfil their contract.

U. S. Schooner Shark,
Columbia River, August 11, 1846.

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